



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

Office of Special Education  
Pupil Personnel Services  
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## Special Education ~ Psychological Services Report to the Shrewsbury School Committee May 2, 2012

### Introduction

Shrewsbury Public Schools employs school psychologists in all of the schools with different FTEs depending on the school and needs. In addition, there are two school adjustment counselors at each of the middle schools.

School	FTE Psychologists
Parker Road	.6
Beal	.8
Spring	.8
Paton	1.0 – also Team Chair
Coolidge	1.0 – also Team Chair
Floral	2.0
Sherwood	3.0 (1 psych. and 2 adjustment counselors)
Oak	3.0 (1 psych. and 2 adjustment counselors)
High School	2.0

The psychologists provide both special education services and services to students in general education. They play an integral part to the schools' culture, safety, and health of the students.

*IDEA defines psychological services at §300.34(c)(10) as follows:*

*(10) **Psychological services** includes—*

- (i) Administering psychological and educational tests, and other assessment procedures;*
- (ii) Interpreting assessment results;*
- (iii) Obtaining, integrating, and interpreting information about child behavior and conditions relating to learning;*
- (iv) Consulting with other staff members in planning school programs to meet the special educational needs of children as indicated by psychological tests, interviews, direct observation, and behavioral evaluations;*

- (v) *Planning and managing a program of psychological services, including psychological counseling for children and parents; and*
- (vi) *Assisting in developing positive behavioral intervention strategies.*

*Psychological services are delivered as a related service when necessary to help eligible children with disabilities benefit from their special education. In some schools, these services are provided by a school psychologist, but some services are also appropriately provided by other trained personnel, including adjustment counselors, school social workers and counselors.*

The psychologist role at all levels ranges widely in scope, across all aspects of school life and all community members. The psychologist role is focused on helping children succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. By definition, this routinely involves collaboration with educators, administrators, parents, and other professionals to create safe, supportive, and effective learning environments. Given training in both mental health and education, the psychologist helps to develop best practices and interventions that take into consideration child development, learning, behavioral and emotional functioning, curriculum and instruction, assessment, collaboration, and building-level systems.

In addition, there are several school psychologists who supervise practicum students who are in a graduate program seeking their degree and license as a school psychologist.

The following areas below reflect the typical responsibilities and functioning of the psychologist:

### **Elementary Schools**

#### **Parker, Beal, Spring, Floral, Coolidge, Paton**

#### Education and Prevention:

- Facilitate Social skills/pragmatics groups (also problem solving and self-regulation)
- Facilitate theme-based groups contingent upon need (i.e., family changes/divorce group, anger management, anxiety, mood, problem solving, self-regulation, etc.)
- Provide individual and small group counseling
- Collaborate for interventions in home and school environments
- Provide classroom management strategies
- Provide whole class guidance lessons/activities as needed
- Anti-bullying intervention and support
- Crisis intervention and support
- DCAP (District Curriculum Accommodation Plan) – general education supports
- Behavior intervention/support – classroom and individual
- Executive function intervention/support – classroom and individual
- Academic intervention/support – classroom and individual
- Short-term social skills support to focus on a specific issue
- Frequent social-emotional check-ins with a number of students

Consultation:

- Participate and facilitate a general education intervention process referred as the Early Intervening Team (EIT). The EIT is a problem-solving model designed to assist in producing positive changes in the learning environment in order to assist children to succeed academically and socially.
- Community-based collaboration with mental health providers and other agencies
- Consultation with parents – family dynamic, behavior, attention/learning concerns, homework, friendship issues
- Consultation with teachers – behavior, attention concerns, learning issues, friendship issues
- Member of the Resource Team, which meets on a weekly basis and consists of all specialists in the building. During Resource meetings the topics of discussion include but are not limited to, upcoming cases, evaluations, interventions, concerns, and meeting times/schedules.

Assessment:

- Participate in the special education eligibility process
- Conduct all cognitive/learning, aptitude assessments, memory/learning, attention/executive functioning, social/emotional/behavioral concerns
- Use assessment data gathered to help make informed instructional decisions.
- Section 504 accommodation plan eligibility and supports
- Transition supports – across buildings, grade levels, summer programming
- Liaison – coordination for students with high-functioning autism spectrum disabilities (Floral)
- Aide Coaching – social skills instruction and supports, data collection, student-specific feedback

Team Chair Responsibilities:

- The school psychologist at Both Paton and Coolidge also serve as the Special Education Team Chair. Their responsibilities further include all the coordination of special education services, TEAM meetings, adherence to state and federal regulations and laws, progress monitoring and overall oversight of the special education programs.

<b>Middle School</b>
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Education and Prevention:

- Conduct comprehensive psycho-educational evaluations based on the documented or suspected area of disability and report results to students, parents, and school staff
- Provide individual and group counseling to students with a variety of learning and emotional needs
- Individual counseling of students with social and emotional needs

Consultation:

- Collaborate with special education and general education staff regarding the development and implementation of Individualized Education Programs
- Collaborate with administrators, teachers, and parents regularly
- Provide regular consultation to general education teachers and guidance counselors regarding pre-referral interventions as part of the Early Intervening Team (EIT)
- Consult with school psychologists at other schools/levels regarding transitions as well as test administration and interpretation.
- Member of the Building Leadership Team which meets once a cycle in order to collaborate around building issues (Sherwood)
- Teaching a pilot program based on my proposal of a General Education Academic Support class at Sherwood in order to supplement services already offered within the building (Sherwood).
- Consult to teachers regarding classroom-based interventions and behavioral interventions
- Consult to parents regarding supporting students with a variety of special needs in the school setting
- Periodically facilitate professional development presentations

Assessment:

- Conduct a wide range of cognitive and achievement testing as determined by documented or suspected areas of disability
- Attend and present testing data at IEP meetings

## High School (SHS)

The two school psychologists at SHS provide a variety of mental health and educational support services to both regular education and special education students. In addition to completing the federally mandated psychological testing that is required for each student receiving special education services, they attend each student's team meeting and help to develop the appropriate educational program for each student. They are both clinically trained licensed psychologists with extensive experience both in the schools and the private sector.

The school psychologists support the needs of not only the students, but their families as well. The mental health needs of SHS students are many and complex. Students today present with many of the same concerns that we all experience, yet typically without the maturity and insight they will come to develop as adults. The students come with complicated family situations - some are suffering the effects of a parent's job loss, the death of a parent, sibling or grandparent, chronic medical and mental health diagnoses, or drug and/or alcohol addictions. They manage these complicated life circumstances in addition to the developmental crises that accompany adolescence, and the life changing decisions they make as they leave the safety of our halls and enter the world of college, work or the military. These are not easy times for our students, and the school psychologists at SHS work daily to support each of the over 1600 students to succeed to the best of their abilities.